

Split-wing Bluebush *Maireana dichoptera*: first record for the Northern Territory

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The genus *Maireana* (Chenopodiaceae) is well represented in the Northern Territory, with 27 species occurring predominantly in the southern arid half (Albrecht *et al.* 1997). Here we report the occurrence of an additional species for the Northern Territory, *Maireana dichoptera* (Split-wing Bluebush).

Maireana dichoptera is a small, perennial sub-shrub (no more than about 20 cm tall) and is readily distinguished from all other Bluebushes by the vertical wings extending above the plane of the prominent horizontal wing that encircles the fruit (illustrated in Wilson (1984), p. 186). It was first described in 1873 by Ferdinand von Mueller from a specimen collected at Bowen Downs in western Queensland and has also been reported from central and southern Queensland (Henderson 1994).

On 17 April 1997, *M. dichoptera* was collected (by AF) from the Barkly Tableland, about 80 km south of the Lake Nash Station homestead and 5 km west of the Queensland/Northern Territory border. The collection site (21°35'S 137°56'E; Fig. 1) was on a plain of brown cracking-clay soils, dissected by the channels of Mudegeegoolla Creek, which supported a relatively dense stand of Gidgee (*Acacia georginae*). At the time of our visit, the ground layer was dominated by annual herbs, particularly grasses, and the site was subject to heavy grazing. *M. dichoptera* was apparently uncommon in this area as it was not noticed at any of 6 other similar sites sampled nearby. Voucher specimens have been lodged at the Alice Springs and Darwin Herbaria.

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References

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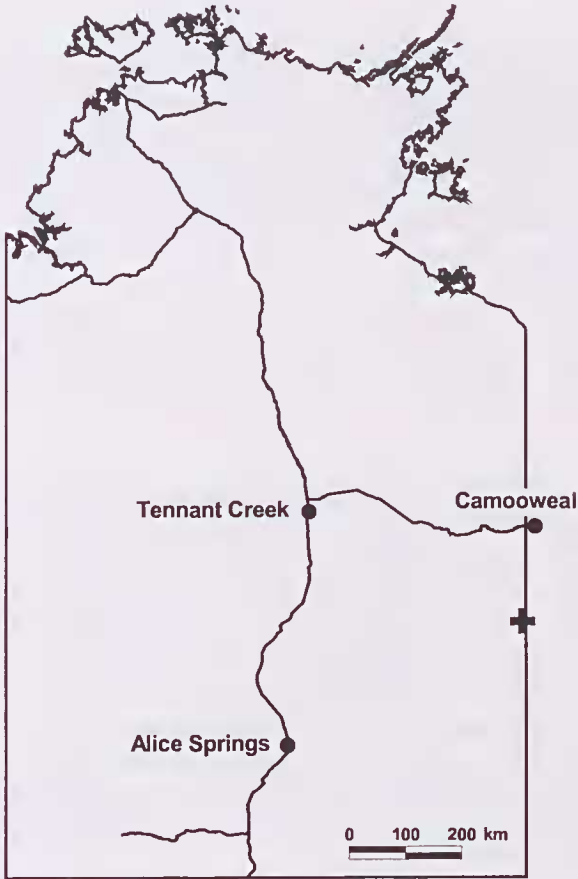


Figure 1. Location (cross) of the new record of *Maireana dichoptera*.